

Obama orders
watchlist look **3**

Bears upset
Vikings in OT **12**

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check out **17**

Boystown salon
on Bravo **28**



Tuesday
DECEMBER 29, 2009

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A Chicago Tribune
publication

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DINE OR DASH?

Let's dish! Resident bugs, grimy bathrooms, servers with
attitude send Chicago diners out the door **pages 22-23**



BLAH, BLAH BLOGGERS

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Ana Fernatt

redeyechicago.com/sexy

A girl should always be classy and fabulous.



Scott Kleinberg

redeyechicago.com/iphone

For the iPhone addict in you.



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A blog run by our loyal readers.



The strangest thing I did over Christmas break was ...

Fernatt: ... sleep and eat well—totally forgot what that was like.

Kleinberg: ... guide a sleigh for some dude with a beard. Funny thing was I don't think it was Santa :-)

Ryan Justice (@RSJustice): ... take back the sweater my mother got my Chihuahua, it was too small ... and hideous.



The CTA costs a penny on New Year's Eve. Where are you going?

Fernatt: 99 Cents Store to spend my spoils.

Kleinberg: Anywhere but the CTA—way too crowded, yo!

Connie Reyes (@clsforconnie): As far as \$2.24 can take me!



Gifts are being returned for more practical items this year—what did you return?

Fernatt: George Michael's heart. He tried that last Christmas, too!

Kleinberg: Not a thing—got everything I wanted and then some.

Jessica Six (@funnybunnytoes): A garlic press. (I received two this year.)



2013

TODAY'S FORECAST

Mostly sunny—but far from warm.



WED.
31
24

May snow—or not.



THU.
29
16

Repeat of Wednesday.



FRI.
20
8

Getting colder. Snow?



SAT.
19
10

Just plain cold.

2do

To listen

Arrive early to get a seat as 10 competitors square off in a themed storytelling series at 8 p.m. Tuesday at Martyrs' (3855 N. Lincoln Ave.). Tuesday's theme is "Cars," and the cover is \$7.

To hear

Check out Pro Jam Session, a live music event hosted by Lorna Boston, from midnight-3:30 a.m. Tuesday at Underground Wonder Bar (10 E. Walton St.).



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President Obama, speaking Monday while on vacation in Hawaii, has ordered a review of U.S. no-fly lists as passengers face sweeping new restrictions. **GETTY IMAGES**

SECURITY FALLOUT

OBAMA ORDERS REVIEW OF WATCHLIST; HOMELAND SECURITY SECRETARY BACKTRACKS, SAYS SYSTEM FAILED

Associated Press

President Obama says he has ordered a review of the nation's watchlist system and of its air safety regulations, and has asked his national security team to keep up the pressure on terrorists aiming to attack the U.S.

Obama says U.S. officials are doing everything in their power to ensure Americans are safe in the wake of the Christmas Day attack on a Northwest Airlines flight bound for Detroit.

The president, issuing a statement Monday during his holiday vacation in Honolulu, says U.S. authorities will not rest until they find everyone involved in the attack in Detroit and hold them accountable.

Obama's remarks were his first in public about a Nigerian man's alleged attempt to bring down the airliner.

Meanwhile, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano conceded Monday that the aviation security system failed when the man, with a U.S. visa in his pocket and a powerful explosive hidden on his body, was allowed to board a flight from Amsterdam to Detroit.

The Obama administration has ordered investigations into the two areas of aviation security—how travelers are placed on watch lists and how passengers are screened—as critics questioned how the 23-year-old charged in the airliner attack

Al-Qaida group says it was behind attack



Abdulmutallab

Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula on Monday claimed responsibility for the attack on a U.S. airliner bound for Detroit on Christmas Day, saying it was retaliation for a U.S. operation against the group in Yemen.

In a statement posted on the Internet, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula said 23-year-old Nigerian Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab coordinated with members of the group, an alliance of militants based in Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

Yemeni forces, helped by U.S. intelligence, carried out two airstrikes against al-Qaida operatives in the country this month. The second one was a day before Abdulmutallab attempted to bring down a Northwest Airlines flight as it prepared to land in Detroit. **AP**

was allowed to board the Dec. 25 flight.

A day after saying the system worked, Napolitano backtracked, saying her words had been taken out of context.

"Our system did not work in this instance," she said on NBC's "Today" show. "No one is happy or satisfied with that. An extensive review is under way."

Billions of dollars have been spent on aviation security since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, when commercial airliners were hijacked and used as weapons. Much of that money has gone toward training and equipment that some security experts say could have detected the explosive device that Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab is accused of hiding on his body.

Abdulmutallab has been charged in federal court with trying to detonate the device as the plane approached Detroit. The device burst into flames instead, according to authorities, and he was subdued by passengers. The plane landed safely.

A federal judge in Detroit postponed until Jan. 8 a hearing on a request by the government to obtain a DNA sample from Abdulmutallab. No reason was given.

Harold Demuren, the head of the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority, said Abdulmutallab paid cash on Dec. 16 for the \$2,831 round-trip ticket from Lagos, Nigeria, to Detroit via Amsterdam. Demuren said Abdulmutallab checked into his flight with only a small carry-on bag.

AIR TRAVEL

What does it take to be banned?

U.S. officials are reviewing the watchlist and screening procedures that ensure safe air travel, but not all lists are equal. **AP**

Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment database

U.S. intelligence and law enforcement as well as trusted allies can nominate "known or suspected terrorists" for this database.

Consolidated Terrorist Watchlist

People are moved onto this list if there is sufficient data so the person being screened can be matched to the name, and if there is enough information to justify a "reasonable suspicion" that the person is known or suspected to be engaged or preparing to engage in terrorist activities.

Selectee List

A subset of the watchlist. People are placed on this list when there is more information about their terrorist activities that suggests they may pose a threat.

No-fly List

Also a subset of the watchlist. In order to be placed on the no-fly list, a known or suspected terrorist must meet more specific criteria showing they present a threat to civil aviation or national security.

AIRLINE RULES

Officials: Flight restrictions relaxed

In-flight security rules have been eased after a two-day clampdown, airline officials familiar with the matter said Monday.

At the captain's discretion, passengers can once again have blankets and other items on their laps or move about the cabin during the tail end of flight. In-flight entertainment restrictions have also been lifted. **AP**

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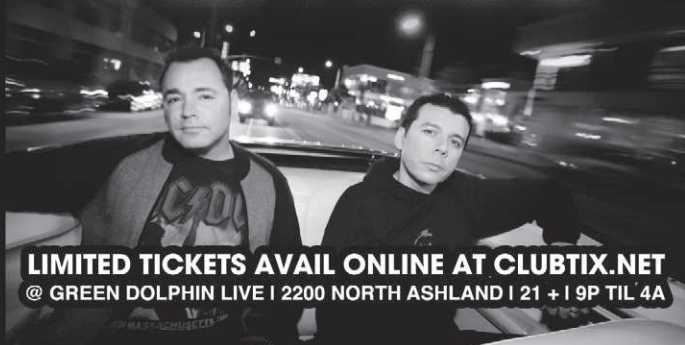
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going public

TRACY SWARTZ
tswartz@tribune.com

Those were the days—the CTA in '09

Next stop: 2010. But before we arrive in the new year, "Going Public" is counting down the top 9 most talked about CTA moments of 2009 from fare hikes to the new Brown Line. Vote for the top transit story of 2009 at redeye.chicago.com/goingpublic.

» **Our fare city:** Riders saw bus and train fares rise Jan. 1, and Chicago Card users saw the bonuses for adding money to their card eliminated.

» **Bus-ted:** In February, the CTA removed hundreds of articulated buses from its fleet because of safety issues.

» **Musical chairs:** Mayor Daley announced his appointment of Rich Rodriguez, former aviation commissioner, to the post of CTA president in February. Rodriguez replaced Ron Huberman, who was tapped to lead Chicago Public Schools.

» **Cell-o-vision:** Cell phone service in the Red and Blue Line subways expanded this year when T-Mobile and Cricket became available underground. Plans to add AT&T service were announced this year but no start date has been revealed.

» **On track:** In May, the CTA finished rolling out Bus Tracker to include information about all regularly scheduled routes.

» **No for the Gold:** Hopes of a CTA Gold Line and other proposed CTA improvements related to the 2016 Olympics were dashed in October when Chicago lost its Olympics bid.

» **Door problems:** Questions about train safety arose in November after a woman reported her stroller got caught in a set of Red Line train doors. She said her baby was thrown on the tracks.

» **Doomsdaze:** Riders won't see fares increase for two years under a deal reached in November between transit and state officials. Service cuts still are slated for 2010.

» **Brown royal:** After nearly four years, the Brown Line capacity project, which included station renovations, is slated to be completed by the end of this week.

RIDER'S BLOCK

My pledge to ride every CTA bus line continues. I rode the No. 72-North last week and boiled my review down to 140 characters, the size of a Twitter tweet. Check out photos from the ride and past bus rides at redeye.chicago.com/busride.

@tracyswartz

65 mins from Sears in Oak Park area to Lincoln Park. Your ticket to big-box stores Home Depot, Walmart, Menards and Best Buy, among others.

Next up: No. 12-Roosevelt.

Cheap New Year's thrills

In keeping with tradition, the CTA said it is offering penny rides from 8 p.m. on Dec. 31 until 6 a.m. on Jan. 1. Later service hours also will be in effect on many bus and rail routes for the holiday. All CTA bus and rail service will operate on a regular weekday schedule on Dec. 31 and on a Sunday/holiday schedule Jan. 1.

Meanwhile, Miller Lite is continuing its free ride service by offering free double-decker bus rides on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day from 9 p.m. until 1 a.m. The buses stop at many North Side restaurants and bars. For more information, go to millerlitefreerides.com or text "RIDE" to 44636.



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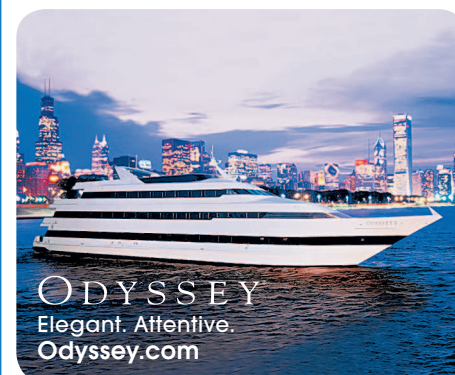
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Soldier Field blown to bits in comic

Chicago Tribune

The opening scene of Marvel's next comic book series goes where many Chicago Bears fans pretty much feel this year's football season already has: Soldier Field is blown to smithereens.

In *Siege No. 1*, writer Brian Bendis and artist Oliver Coipel kick off a four-part series that Marvel officials say was "seven years in the making," involving every major Marvel character in "the greatest assembly of heroes and villains you've ever seen." The first book is due out Jan. 6.

Tom Gronkowski, a cashier at Graham Cracker Comics in the Loop, has been hearing Marvel's hype about the *Siege* series for years, saying snippets of the impending series appeared in issues of other comics. And the irony of the field being destroyed isn't lost on Gronkowski.

"It's been a disappointment to say the least," Gronkowski said of this year's Bears season. "I guess the Marvel world won't really miss Soldier Field."

Gronkowski has noticed a surge of comics being infused with current events but has mixed feelings about the trend.

When President Obama made an appearance in the tail-end of a *Spider-Man* comic, Gronkowski said the issues flew off the shelves. Now, one copy remains in the store—asking price \$120. On the other hand, an issue about Obama's dog Bo sat idle for months before an article about it helped prompt a sellout, Gronkowski said.

"It can be useful when it's done well," Gronkowski said of wrapping in current events. In this case, Gronkowski thinks the stadium's fictional explosion is a timely—and amusing—coincidence, given the Bears' performance on the field.

After all, most Bears fans would concede that even Captain America couldn't save the team now.

Snow blindness

LED traffic signals can be obscured in winter

Chicago Tribune

Towns across Illinois and nationwide have switched to LED traffic signals because they burn brighter, last longer and save money by using 90 percent less energy than older incandescent bulbs. But they also emit less heat, meaning they sometimes have trouble melting snow.

This has caused problems across the Midwest. In Wisconsin earlier this month, snow blanketed LED traffic lights in some towns, leading to "crashes at intersections where drivers aren't sure whether to stop or go," according to The Associated Press.

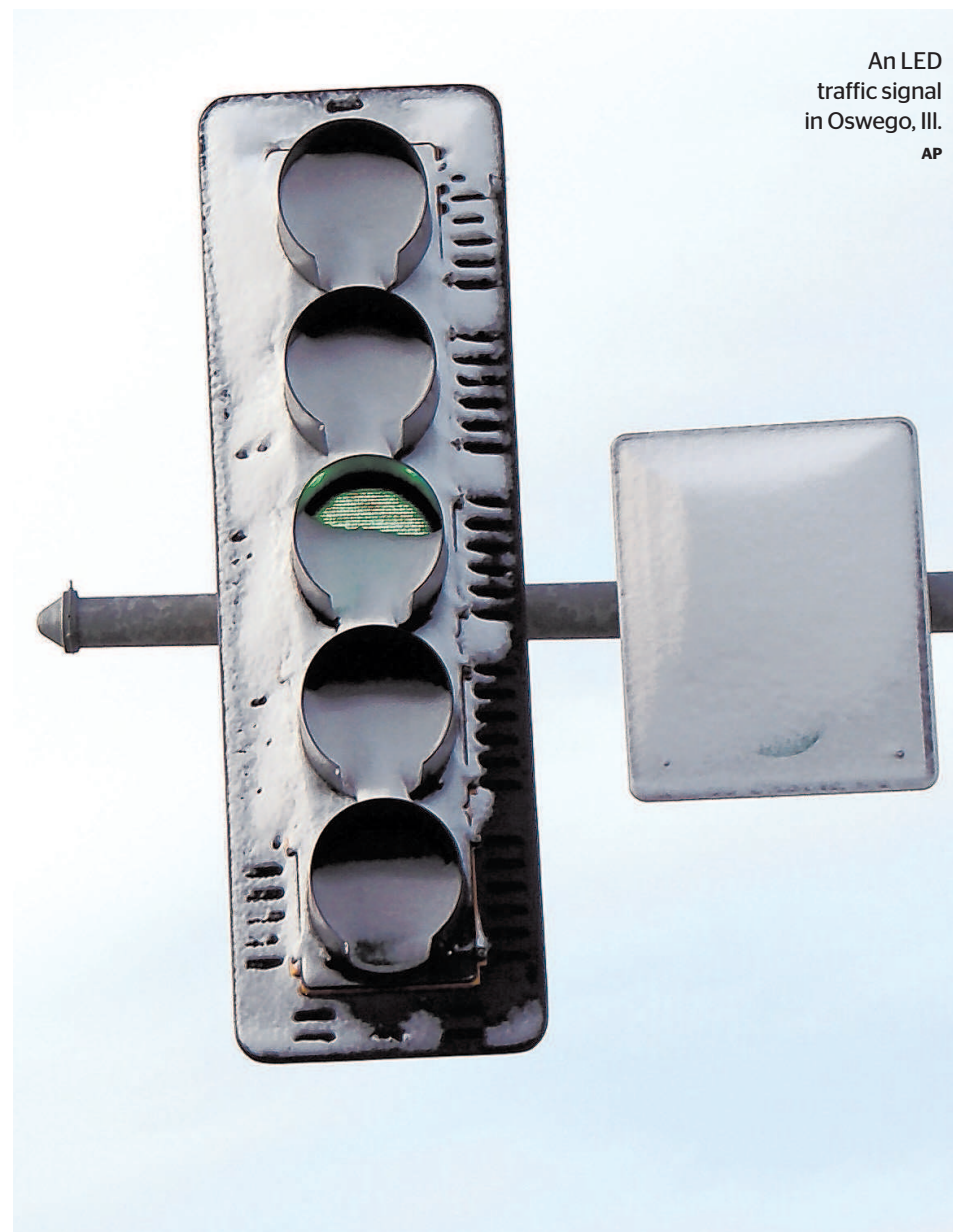
Manufacturers say they are aware of the problem and have looked at solutions, such as adding a heating element to LED signals. But adding heat would diminish the energy savings of LED signals, said Roy Burton, chief executive of Dialight, an LED traffic-signal manufacturer.

"We can remove the snow with heat, but the cost of doing that in terms of energy use has not brought any enthusiasm from cities and states that buy these signals," Burton said. "They'd like to be able to take away this issue, but they don't want to spend the money and lose the savings."

Those savings can be significant. When west suburban St. Charles installed LED traffic lights at First and Illinois avenues in 2005, energy costs dropped more than 80 percent, from \$63.30 a month to \$9.95.

Communities also save money on replacing signals because LED lights last up to 10 times longer than incandescent bulbs. And they can receive funding to cover upfront costs. The Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation has given out \$9.9 million in grants for 150 government agencies to upgrade traffic signals at nearly 5,400 intersections around Illinois, according to the foundation's Web site.

Meanwhile, the Illinois Department of Transportation has aggressively pushed for replacing incandescent traffic signals with LED lights, requiring communities that install red-light cameras to use LED traffic lights at those intersections because they



An LED traffic signal in Oswego, Ill.

AP

burn brighter, said Priscilla Tobias, an IDOT safety engineer.

LEDs "are much more visible to the motorist so they have more time to see the traffic signal and react," Tobias said. "Not only are we addressing energy efficiency, we're also improving safety at intersections."

In Chicago's suburbs, engineers say snow can cover LED traffic signals, but only under certain conditions—wet, driving snow and freezing temperatures—and rarely every sig-

nal at an intersection.

They say the problem is easily remedied by maintenance crews using brooms and occurs so infrequently—once or twice a winter—that it does not outweigh the benefits of energy efficiency.

"Maybe it takes longer to melt and you have to go and clean them off, but it's part of the trade-off for years of energy savings," said Tony Khawaja, a traffic engineer for the Lake County Division of Transportation.

Abused girl's body returned to Chicago

Euranus Barron on Monday covered the body of her 2-year-old daughter in a Tinker Bell blanket and hugged her, the mother's tears dampening the girl's cheeks.

The blanket was a Christmas gift that little Orionis Barron-Taylor didn't live to open. She will be buried in a gold and ivory dress and tiny tiara, what would have been her holiday outfit.

"I'm not going to see my daughter anymore," Barron said earlier, crying. "I'm not going to hear her laugh."

About a month ago, Barron, 22, of Humboldt Park, sent Orionis to a St. Louis suburb to live temporarily with relatives while the mom worked two retail jobs and planned to start school in January. Barron said she had believed the time apart would give them both a better life in the long run.

Orionis died Dec. 19 after authorities say she was abused by her great-aunt's boyfriend.

Police said the toddler suffered a skull fracture, burns on her left hand, bruises on her back

and buttocks, and internal injuries.

Her body was returned to Chicago on a flight donated by Wings of Hope, a St. Louis-based nonprofit that provides transportation for healthcare and other humanitarian causes.

The casket arrived at Midway Airport about noon Monday, and Barron viewed Orionis' body a few hours later.

Marquicio Johnson, 33, of Hazelwood, Mo., is being held in the St. Louis County Jail

in lieu of \$250,000 cash-only bail. Johnson was charged with first-degree assault and endangering the welfare of a child, said Hazelwood Police Lt. Jim Hudanick. He said authorities might ask for the charges to be upgraded pending the medical examiner's full report.

Hudanick said the toddler's great aunt was at work when the alleged abuse occurred.

Johnson was caring for Orionis at the time, police said.

More states join fight over Asian carp

Chicago Tribune

Legal forces in the Upper Midwest arrayed against the invasive Asian carp Monday, as Minnesota joined a lawsuit with Ohio and Michigan applying legal pressure to seal off Illinois' carp-infested waterways from the Great Lakes.

The lawsuit, filed by Michigan before the U.S. Supreme Court last week, raises the potential that the Chicago and O'Brien locks in downtown Chicago and south suburban Burnham might be ordered closed -- an outcome that would have major repercussions in the Chicago area.

Hundreds of millions of dollars in freight and recreation in northeast Illinois would have to be rerouted or reorganized if the locks were closed.

But the state of Michigan says it is suing Illinois and other parties to protect a more vital economic interest: a fishing industry on the lakes worth a reported \$7 billion annually.

Ohio joined the suit last week. On Monday, so did Minnesota.

The sums at stake underscore the powerful and emotional interests aligning on either side of the advance of carp.

A trade group for the barge industry, the American Waterways Operators, says closing the locks would disrupt shipments of jet fuel, coal, road salt and other products. Backers of the Michigan lawsuit, including the Alliance for the Great Lakes, downplay the impact, arguing that much of the inland navigation would remain unchanged except for transfers at or near the locks. Still, new infrastructure would have to be built to transfer cargo.

Undisputed is that overwater shipping provides much of the muscle behind the region's shipping capacity, and that it is now in play with mounting concerns over the voracious carp.



Firefighters pick up their equipment after putting out a fire Monday at 3808 W. 24th Street in Little Village on the West Side. Fire officials say there were no injuries, but two people were displaced.

MICHAEL TER-
CHA/TRIBUNE

Wacker Drive reopens

Traffic and buses were diverted Monday afternoon because of falling ice and possibly falling glass on South Wacker Drive, police said.

The traffic diversion ended about 2:30 p.m., said News Affairs Officer Veejay Zala.

Police diverted traffic between Monroe and Adams because of falling ice at 150 S. Wacker Dr., Chicago Police News Affairs Officer Michael Fitzpatrick said. Buses also were rerouted in the area.

Man found slain in Chatham

A 25-year-old man is dead after police found him shot in the head Sunday night, slumped at the wheel of a bullet-riddled vehicle in Chatham.

Myron Thomas, of the 6500 block of South Harvard Avenue, was pronounced dead at 8:36 p.m. at Stroger Hospital, according to a spokesman for the Cook County medical examiner's office.

Police were in the area of the 8200 block of South Evans Avenue and heard shots about 7:30 p.m., said Chicago Police News Affairs Officer Michael Fitzpatrick. An area resident also called police after hearing seven to eight shots, he said.

No one was in custody, and police have no motive, police said.

Ad questions candidate's sexual orientation

A candidate with a history of anti-Semitic rhetoric and legal disputes in federal court launched a radio ad for his Republican U.S. Senate campaign today that questioned the sexual orientation of the front-runner in the race: U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, a candidate seeking the Feb. 2 Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate seat once held by President Obama. In the radio ad, which aired Monday on WGN-AM and WBBM-AM, Andy Martin attributes a "solid rumor that Kirk is a homosexual" to conservative Republican businessman Jack Roeser.

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Gay marriage milestone

1 Two Argentine men were joined Monday in Latin America's first same-sex marriage. Gay rights activists Jose Maria Di Bello and Alex Freyre were married in Ushuaia, the capital of Argentina's Tierra del Fuego state, in a ceremony witnessed by state and federal officials.

Obama interrupted

2 President Obama abruptly ended his golf outing in Kailua, Hawaii, and sped in his motorcade to his compound Monday after he learned a child of a friend was injured while playing on the beach. Members of the first family were fine, a White House official said, and Obama returned to the course after a brief delay.

China executes Briton

3 Britain says China has executed a Briton convicted of drug smuggling after rejecting a string of appeals from the British government and his relatives who say the man was mentally unstable and lured into the crime. Akmal Shaikh was the first European citizen executed in China in half a century.

Iran holds bodies

4 Iranian authorities said Monday that they were holding the bodies of five slain anti-government protesters, including the nephew of the opposition leader, in what appeared to be an attempt to prevent activists from using their funerals as a platform for more demonstrations.

Suicide bomb kills 30

5 A suicide bomber struck a procession marking a key Shiite Muslim holy day in Karachi, Pakistan, on Monday, killing 30 people in an attack blamed on extremists trying to hamper the country's fight against militancy by sparking a sectarian war.

Civilian deaths condemned

6 Ten civilians, including eight students, were killed in fighting involving international forces in the country's remote east, Afghan President Hamid Karzai said Monday. He condemned the deaths and called for an investigation.

American detained

7 North Korea says it has detained an American man who illegally entered the country. The Korean Central News Agency said the man was detained after entering through the North Korea-China border last Thursday.

THE DIGIT

124

Law enforcement deaths this year dropped to their lowest level since 1959, the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund said Monday. Through Dec. 27, 124 officers were killed, compared with 133 in 2008.

Sheen pulled knife, wife says

8 **DENVER** Charlie Sheen's wife told police the actor pinned her on a bed, put a knife to her throat and threatened to kill her in a Christmas Day fight in Aspen that began when she said she wanted a divorce.

An arrest warrant affidavit released Monday quotes Brooke Mueller Sheen as saying that the actor straddled her on a bed with one hand grasping her neck and the other holding the knife. She said Sheen told her: "You better be in fear. If you tell anybody, I'll kill you."

The 44-year-old Sheen denied threatening his wife with a knife or choking her, and told officers they had slapped each other on the

WHERE IS HE?

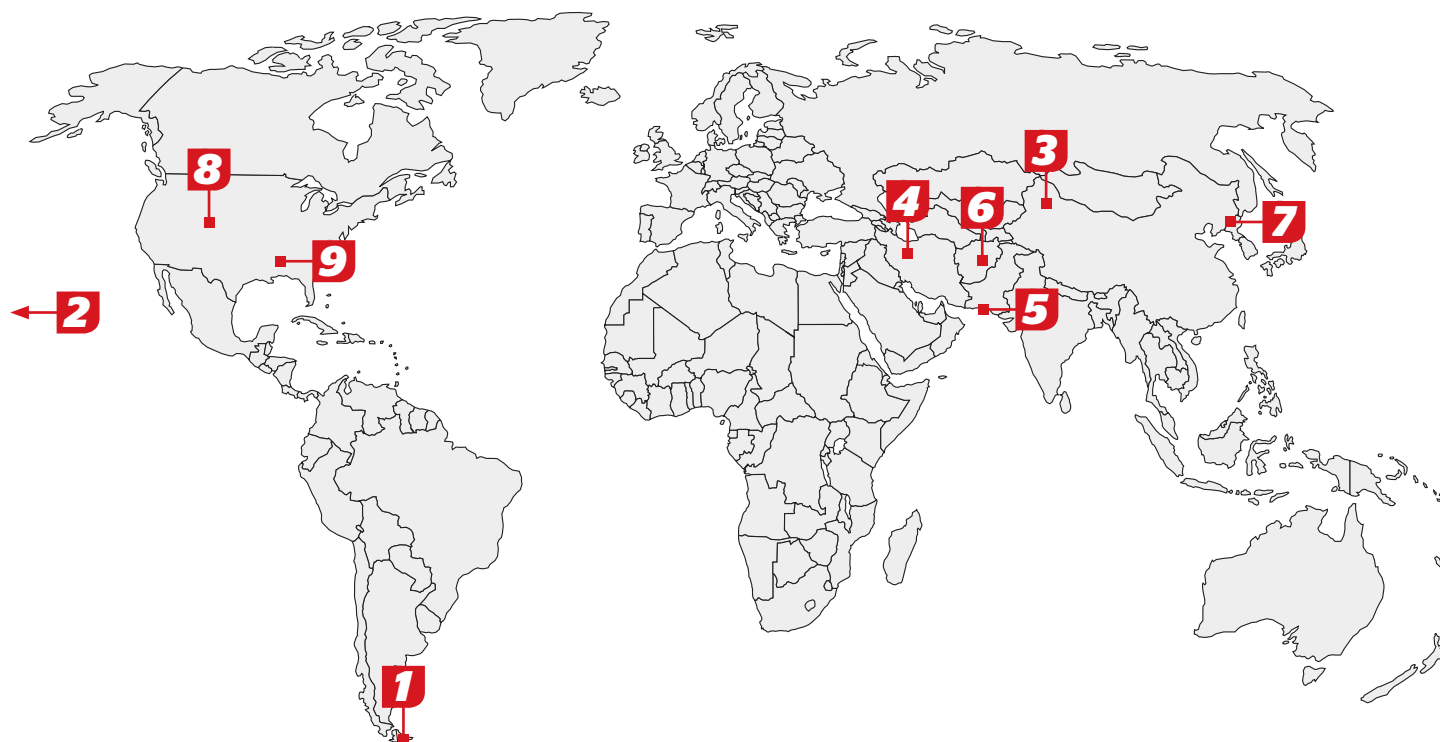
Charlie Sheen is back in L.A., his publicist said Monday. Stan Rosenfield, who represents Sheen, issued the following statement after Sheen's arrest: "Do not be misled by appearance. Appearance and reality can be as different as night and day. It would benefit everyone not to jump to any conclusion."

arms and that he had snapped two pairs of her eyeglasses in front of her, according to the affidavit. An ambulance was sent to the house in Aspen, but police say no one was taken to the hospital.

Charlie Sheen, who is listed in the affidavit by his legal name, Carlos Irwin Estevez, told police he and his wife have been having marital problems and that she abuses alcohol.

Sheen was arrested on suspicion of menacing, second-degree assault and criminal mischief. The affidavit also lists a charge of domestic violence, which authorities had not previously mentioned. Sheen is free on \$8,500 bond.

Chief Deputy District Attorney Arnold Mordkin said Monday that Sheen's next court appearance is Feb. 8, and no decision on whether to prosecute him is expected until shortly before that.



6 kids, 3 adults killed in fire

9 **STARKVILLE, Miss.** Fire gutted an apartment in a rundown complex Monday, killing three women and six children, including several family members taken in because they had nowhere else to go, officials and neighbors said.

The children were ages 6 months to 6 years.

Latasha Brown, who lives downstairs, said she never heard smoke detectors, but a neighbor banged on her door around 4 a.m. to tell her to get out. She grabbed her 3-year-old son and 9-year-old daughter and ran barefoot into the cold.

"It was horrifying," said Brown, 28. "I've never seen anything like it in my life."

Fire Chief Rodger Mann said investigators have no evidence to suggest someone set the blaze.

"A fire investigation is like a puzzle," he said. "We've got to get enough pieces of the puzzle to get a picture of what happened."

Autopsies were ordered on the bodies of the three women, authorities said, and may also be ordered on the children.



Chassel Jenkins (in blanket) is comforted by friends Monday after a fire moved through an apartment complex where Chase lived in Starkville, Miss. Nine people, including six children, died in the blaze, officials said. AP PHOTO



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sports



Devin Aromashodu grabs a pass in front of Madiou Williams during Monday's game. AP

Backup's got game

Jay Cutler said Devin Aromashodu was a receiver capable of going up and getting the ball. That ability was on display Monday night.

Starting in place of the injured Devin Hester, Aromashodu helped the Bears jump out to a surprising 16-0 halftime edge on the heavily favored Vikings. His leaping, 26-yard catch between two defenders set up Cutler's 7-yard touchdown bullet to tight end Greg Olsen.

The 6-foot-2 Aromashodu, who was targeted four times in the first half, caught seven passes in the game for a team-high 150 yards.

Cutler has been lobbying for the big receiver all season and Aromashodu finally got extensive playing time in place of Hester two games ago against the Packers. He caught a team-high eight passes for 76 yards and a touchdown in a 21-14 loss. Then Aromashodu struggled the next week against the Ravens, making some curious if he was a one-hit wonder.

Monday night, he proved that wasn't the case. And he might have secured himself a spot in the Bears' future.

» Punter Brad Maynard was questionable coming into the game with a groin injury but played. The Bears signed Richmond McGee on Monday afternoon as insurance and placed him on the active roster after placing Ogunleye on injured reserve. After Maynard tested out his leg, the Bears put McGee on the inactive list.

» Orlando Pace was active after missing the previous three games and was the swing tackle behind starters Chris Williams and Kevin Shaffer. **TRIBUNE**

BEARS 36, MINNESOTA 30

WORKING OVERTIME

CUTLER CONNECTS WITH AROMASHODU AFTER MINNESOTA RALLIES TO TIE GAME

Chicago Tribune

If this Bears team had shown up two months ago, there might not be jobs on the line at Halas Hall.

As it is, the firing squad still figures to assemble at this time next week when a season that has fallen well short of expectations comes to a merciful end. But on

NFC NORTH	W	L	PCT
Minnesota	11	4	.733
Green Bay	10	5	.667
BEARS	6	9	.400
Detroit	2	13	.133

Monday night at Soldier Field, general manager Jerry Angelo got validation on his youth movement or the Bears got a big dose of false hope for what promises to be a busy offseason.

For the first time this season, the Bears had a balanced and potent offense with Jay Cutler leading the way in a 36-30 overtime upset of the Minnesota Vikings.

Cutler hit Devin Aromashodu on a 39-yard touchdown pass in overtime to give the Bears the victory and raise their record to 6-9 going into the season finale Sunday at Detroit. The winning score was set up when Bears linebacker stripped the ball from Vikings running back Adrian Peterson and the Bears recovered on the Minnesota 39.

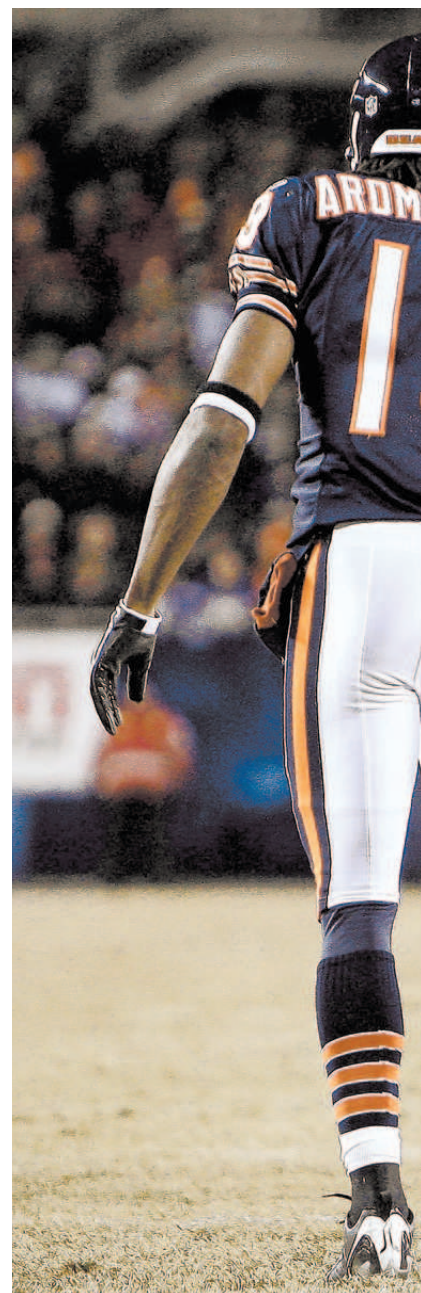
The Bears had taken a 30-23 lead with 4:55 to play in regulation on a Cutler-to-Earl Bennett 20-yard touchdown pass, only to see Brett Favre march the Vikings back for a game-tying, six-yard TD pass on fourth-and-goal to Sidney Rice with 16 seconds remaining in regulation.

The Bears received the kickoff to open the overtime period and moved into field-goal range, but Robbie Gould missed a 45-yard attempt wide right.

The Vikings appeared to be unraveling at the worst possible time, having lost three of their last four games, and the Bears took it to them when the only thing they had to play for was pride and the chance to leave a late impression on the decision-makers.

Maybe the best outcome of the game was the job Chris Williams did at left tackle protecting Cutler's blind side vs. Jared Allen. He got a lot of help from running back Matt Forte but held up well in his first major test, good enough to give Angelo reason for confidence heading into 2010.

A strong effort against a good team came at least a month too late. Much more was expected from the Bears, even if few gave them a chance to succeed here. With the new year will come a resolution for change.



Where has this been?

I am sick of this. Just sick. I have been for weeks now. My shrink says I've been sick for years. In the head, that is. But that's a different story for a different time.

I'm talking about the Bears. They won, you say?

I know they did. That's my point.

Minnesota is one of the best teams in the NFC, if not the NFL. The Bears handled them pretty well. If not for that guy named Brett Favre, the Bears would have

easily walked away with this one.

Why so glum, you ask?

These Bears couldn't do the same against not-as-good teams like San Francisco, Atlanta, Green Bay or Baltimore. Beat those teams, and this season is a totally different story.

That's why they play the games, you say?

Yes, yes it is.

But it makes you wonder about what could have been, what should have been.



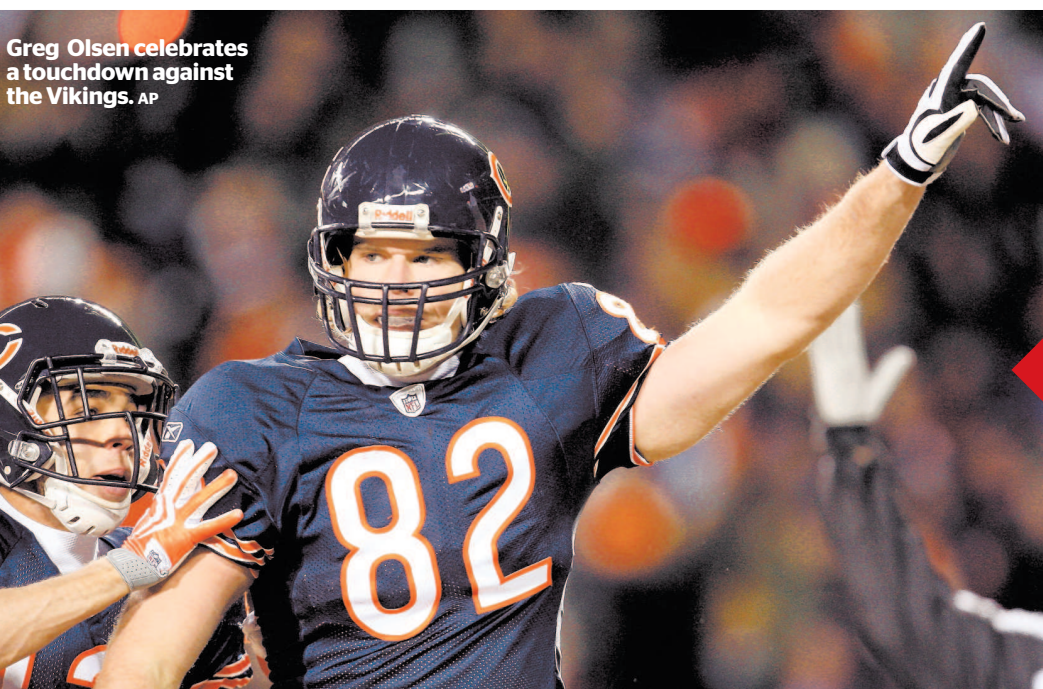
TUESDAY MOURNING | BY BAG BOY

That's always how it is with the Bears it seems.

That's why I wear this bag, I say.



Devin Aromashodu (left) is congratulated by Jay Cutler after he makes a catch Monday against the Vikings in the second quarter. JOSÉ M. OSORIO/TRIBUNE



Greg Olsen celebrates a touchdown against the Vikings. AP

Three Bears

Who was hot, not and just right in Monday night's game. **TRIBUNE**

TOO HOT Jay Cutler

The quarterback apparently got his hands on some night-vision goggles. He wasn't the same player who had struggled in night games all season. Most of his passes were on point, like his 7-yard dart to Greg Olsen and 2-yard floater to Desmond Clark for scores. And he had success despite banging up his throwing hand near the end of the first half. If that hadn't occurred, Cutler might have had another touchdown toss before halftime to boost his 96.5 passer rating.

TOO COLD Josh Bullocks

The veteran safety was just right for most of the game before he got cold at the worst time: the fourth quarter. First, he allowed receiver Greg Lewis to get in front of him for a 27-yard pickup. Then Bullocks was late getting over to help Zack Bowman on the next play, Brett Favre's 12-yard hookup with Sidney Rice. Bullocks also was the defender on the next play, Percy Harvin's 12-yard reception. It all led to Adrian Peterson's 1-yard touchdown run to tie the score 23-23.

JUST RIGHT Greg Olsen

Olsen had three catches for 47 yards in the first half and showed his great hands on the touchdown toss from Cutler. The duo, however, did fail to connect on an early second-quarter play in the red zone, causing the Bears to settle for Robbie Gould's 42-yard field goal.

Here's to the good new days

Good riddance to the 2000s. Other than the exceedingly rare World Series title, this decade was full of losing.

But as we enter the 2010s, things are looking up—for a few teams. Here's my rundown of how the decade will fare for Chicago sports teams. Please save all hate mail until 2019.



Scott Bolohan

redeyesports
@tribune.com



Blackhawks: With so much young talent signed for such a long time,

the Hawks have become not only the model franchise in Chicago, but maybe in all of sports. They have great fans, smart people running the team and, most importantly, they win. If this team doesn't win multiple Cups next decade, I'd be disappointed. Potential: Dynasty.

Bulls: This one is more of a gamble. With three good young players in Derrick Rose, Luol Deng and Joakim Noah, the foundation is set. Now all they need is to spend their cap money wisely this summer (Dwyane Wade/Chris Bosh) and suddenly they have the makings of a very dangerous team. Potential: Championship.



White Sox: I'm always confused by this team. Are they rebuilding or trying to win? Let Jermaine Dye and Scott Podsednik go, but trade for Jake Peavy? Either way, Kenny Williams is smart, and with Gordon Beckham and John Danks around (plus the incredibly weak AL Central), they'll contend. Potential: Pretty much anything.



Cubs: They're old and overpaid. The Alfonso Soriano contract looks bad now and over the next five years he's owed around \$90 million (approximately the number of misplayed balls he'll have). There's going to have to be a serious look at rebuilding in the next decade. Potential: Cursed.



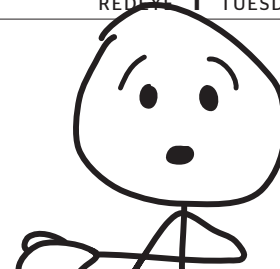
Bears: Jay Cutler will be here (for better or worse) but whether any other Bear should be is questionable. This team needs to start over, which means two or three good drafts. With no high picks next year, you can push the recovery time back another year at least. Potential: Six coaches in 10 years.



SCOTT BOLOHAN IS A REDEYE SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR.

Farewell ...

Someday soon, the Bears season will be over, but these five will—some say unfortunately—go on. redye.chicago.com/5on5.



TOPIC	BRIAN MOORE brmoore@tribune.com	JULIE DICARO twitter.com/aleagueofherown	ALEX QUIGLEY twitter.com/alexquigley	BAG BOY redeyesports@tribune.com	STICK FIGURE redeyesports@tribune.com
1 The last game of the Bears season will be like ...	... that time Alex finally stopped talking about his ingrown toenail.	... the end of a long date with a guy you decided halfway through you really, really hated.	... the toxic waste dump scene in "RoboCop." It'll be in Detroit, and it will be ugly.	... a sad, sad start to the new year. Losing to the Lions is no way to start a decade.	... Christmas all over again.
2 If Doug Collins were to become Bulls coach again ...	... he won't have Air Jordan, he'll have Hair Joakim.	... we get the '80s-era Jordan and Pippen back? Woo-hoo!	... the Bulls will win the NBA Finals. After Phil Jackson unseats him. Again.	... they'd still suck.	... then Brian can finally wear his Doug Collins underwear proudly.
3 How are the current Bulls like the team Collins coached in the late '80s?	Both are called the Bulls. That's about it.	They're bad at basketball.	Both teams lost to the Celtics in the previous playoffs, and both had Pax!	They both needed a real coach.	I love both—but both don't even know I exist. (Sniff, sniff.)
4 After a weekend sweep of Nashville, how did the Hawks use their day off?	Watching the Bears-Vikings game and laughing.	Mani-pedis.	Staring in the mirror, asking "Who's awesome?" and pointing at the reflection.	By flying to Dallas?	Playing with their new toys they got for Christmas. Wait, that's what I did.
5 Let's think warm thoughts. How long until pitchers and catchers report to Spring Training?	Not long enough for Cubs fans.	Sorry, the thought of John Grabow and Tom Gorzelanny turning up for the Cubs fails to cheer me up.	Depending on when you read this: 4,406,400 seconds. Nerd up in here.	Just long enough for Cubs fans to regain all hope. It'll be gone by May.	Don't you have a calendar to look at?

NYEhotspots.com
the best listing of the hottest New Year's Eve parties in Chicago



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AthTweets

Sports stars have embraced Twitter, but do they score with their tweets? Let's see.



Brandi Chastain

@brandichastain

Women's soccer player

My Christmas presents have extended past the holiday, my son just said, "you are my super best friend." What more can a parent ask for? Aahh.

Jared Dudley

@JaredDudley619

Phoenix Suns, Forward

Big week for the suns.. It starts tonight vs the lakers.. Gotta slow down Kobe somehow.. So here's the question.. How do u guard Kobe?

DeSean Jackson

@deseanjackson10

Philadelphia Eagles, wide receiver

I came in this world cry'n and everybody smile'n. Ima leave this world smile'n and everybody cry'n ... and thas ohhh soooooo real.

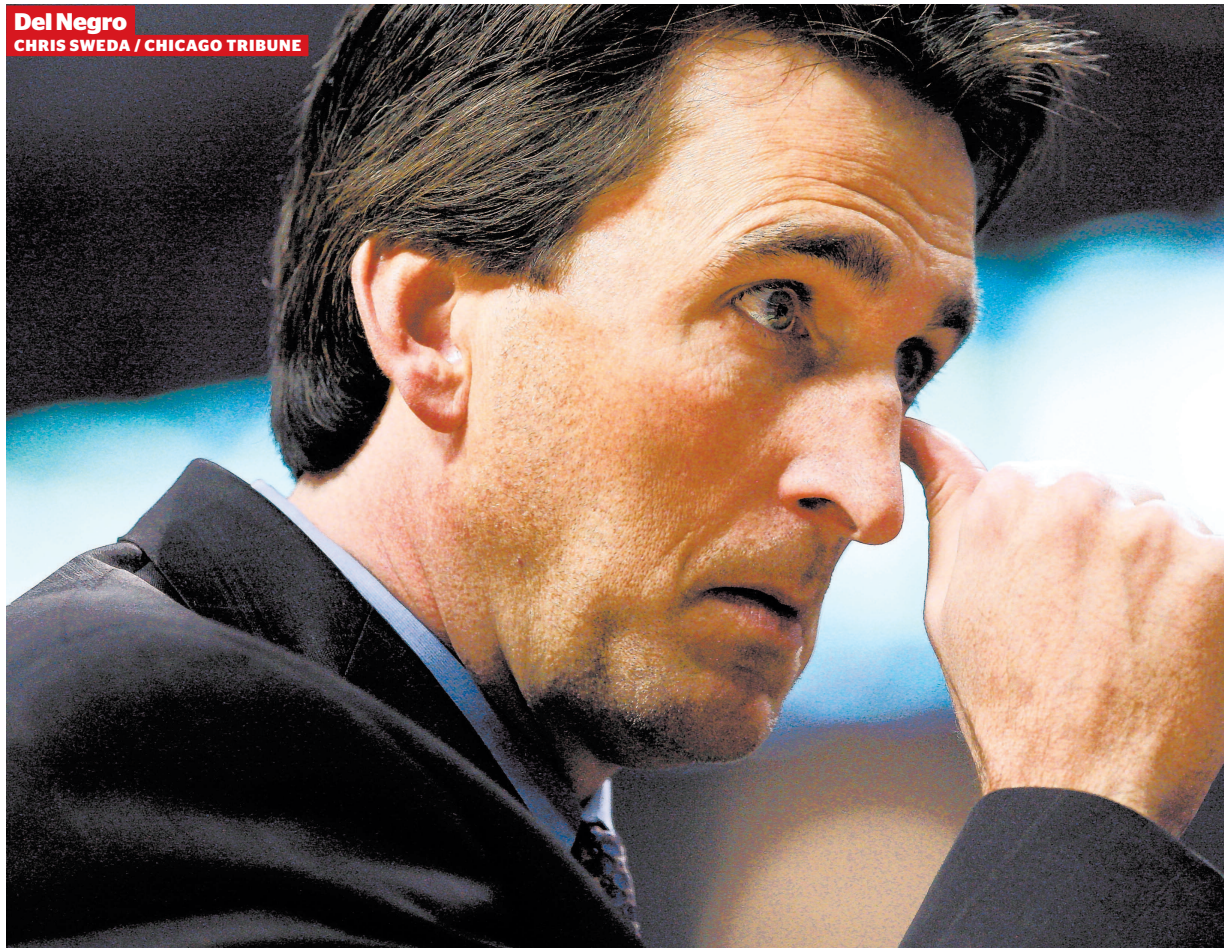
Christian Vande Velde

@ChristianVDV

Pro cyclist

Hope to see you [Tuesday] at the Garmin Super Store on Michigan Ave at 5pm.

Del Negro
CHRIS SWEDA / CHICAGO TRIBUNE



VINNY IN LIMBO

BULLS WON'T DISCUSS EMBATTLED COACH'S FUTURE WITH TEAM

On the same day Pacers president Larry Bird supported embattled coach Jim O'Brien, Bulls management declined to address Vinny Del Negro's future as speculation continues to swirl.

That left Del Negro, who matches wits against O'Brien on Tuesday, to fend for himself after an **espn.com** report claiming the Bulls contacted Doug Collins recently about the coaching position.

"Oh yeah, absolutely," Del Negro said when asked if he felt he had management's support. "I talk to them every day. But when you ask those questions, it's easy for me to say that. Go ask those guys."

Through a team spokesman, general manager Gar Forman declined to address reporters.

"I know we're on the same page," Del Negro said of

management. "But when people are down, they're going to jump on you. ... I go on what the people I work with and the people that make those decisions tell me. They've been supportive."

Nevertheless, the Tribune previously reported Del Negro isn't expected to finish his three-year contract. There are no signs, however, a coaching change is imminent.

The Tribune independently reported Collins won't be taking over the Bulls imminently. The Tribune hasn't confirmed whether ESPN's report that the Bulls asked Collins to coach is accurate. If so, that would represent a significant shift in organizational philosophy. In 2007, executive vice president of basketball operations John Paxson signed off on Collins' hire, but chairman Jerry Reinsdorf and Collins mutually decided the fit wasn't right.



» The head of the Nevada boxing commission ordered Manny Pacquiao, left, and Floyd Mayweather Jr. to submit to urine tests Monday as a way of trying to break the impasse that has threatened to derail their proposed March 13 megafight.

» It usually isn't big news when a team from the Big Ten moves into The Associated Press' college basketball poll. It is when that team is Northwestern. The Wildcats moved into the poll Monday at No. 25, their first appearance in the rankings since 1969.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Monday's scores

» Pittsburgh 65, DePaul 52
» Samford 63, Chicago St. 46
» UMKC 63, SIU-Edwardsville 54
» Loyola 63, St. Francis 46

Tuesday's games

» UIC vs. Toledo, 7 p.m.



watch dog

WHIZZER
redeyesports
@tribune.com

The Bears already lost the week of Thanksgiving and Christmas. Monday was their way of saying happy New Year. Here now, my TV picks.



NBA Bulls vs. Indiana

7 p.m. CSN

The Pacers are just what the doctor ordered. Dr. Kevorkian, that is.



NHL Blackhawks at Dallas

7 p.m. Vs.

Hawks are now tops in the entire NHL. Buckle up. This is uncharted territory, folks.



CHAMPS SPORTS BOWL Miami vs. Wisconsin

7 p.m. ESPN

This is played in Orlando. Think Miami might have the crowd on its side?

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THE COUNTDOWN

The latest ETAs on coming-soon spots

THIS WEEK

Macku Sushi

Sushi and contemporary Japanese fare in Lincoln Park from a talented team last seen at Kaze

EARLY JANUARY

Purple Pig

Mediterranean-focused Michigan Avenue spot serving lots of wine and pork

Filter

Wicker Park coffeehouse making a bigger, greener comeback

JAN. 7

State Street Pizza

Pizza-by-the-slice in River North

JAN. 11

Second City Subs

DePaul area sandwich shop

JAN. 15

Longman & Eagle

Modern take on a traditional Chicago inn—food included—in Logan Square

Orange

River North outpost of the local brunch juggernaut

JAN. 18

Karyn's on Green

Greektown spot from holistic health queen Karyn Calabrese

MID-JANUARY

J. Wellington's

Late-night BYOB burger joint in Wicker Park

Leo's Coney Island of Chicago

Detroit favorite bringing Coney-style dogs to the Windy City

LATE JANUARY

Prairie Fire

West Loop spinoff of top-notch contemporary American suburban spot Prairie Grass Cafe

In with the new

A dozen December openings pave the way for a tasty 2010

By M. Kathleen Pratt and Erin Osmon

Restaurants that beat the clock to open in the final weeks of 2009 include a contemporary American bistro with Italian soul and a pair of fancy-pants hotel spots.

Ceres' Table

4882 N. Clark St. 773-878-4882

This Uptown spot from Giuseppe Scurato (most recently of Topaz Cafe in Burr Ridge) stays true to its name—Ceres is the Roman goddess of agriculture—with a rotating menu of seasonal and locally focused fare. Scurato's contemporary American menu is informed by his time working with Wolfgang Puck in California and Michael Kornick here in Chicago, as well as his European training and Southern Italian roots. In addition to daily specials, look for dishes such as country-style pate and flat-iron steak with lemon-roasted potatoes and shallot fondue.

Balsan

11 E. Walton St. 312-646-1400

After multiple delays, this breakfast, lunch and dinner spot on the third floor of the Gold Coast's chichi new Elysian Hotel finally opened with a menu that centers on artisanal comfort food. Specialties include house-made charcuterie and creative offal dishes such as veal heart with pears, mustard, parmesan and herbs. A wood-burning oven turns out whole chicken, tartes flambees and more, while a raw bar focuses on oysters.

Ria

11 E. Walton St. 312-880-4400

The Elysian kicks it up a notch at this more sophisticated dinner-only counterpart to Balsan, where the seafood-heavy menu might feature preparations of everything from Japanese freshwater eel to wild Portuguese turbot. You'll also find non-seafood options such as dry-aged ribeye and Peking duck for two. Prices are in line with some of the top restaurants in town, and the modern decor is worthy of a special occasion, with plush banquettes, silk wall coverings and leather chairs.

Kith and Kin

1119 W. Webster Ave. 773-472-7070

Chef David Carrier, an alum of Trio and the French Laundry, applies fine-dining chops to traditional notions of comfort food at this neighborhood-focused eatery in Lincoln Park. Your meal might start with a crock of chicken liver pate or grouper throat salad with warm crostini; larger plates include pappardelle with wild mushrooms, bourride of seared hiramasa and littleneck clams, and a 24-ounce rib-eye for two.

NEW
ON THE
SCENE
DINING



Ceres' Table
BARRY BRECHEISEN FOR METROMIX

MORE DECEMBER OPENINGS:

» **Beard Papa's**, a Block 37 outpost of the much-loved Japanese cream puff franchise

» **Cuna**, a clubby culinary lounge in Lakeview with former Sepia chef Kendal Duque in the kitchen

» **Macello**, a rustic Italian spot in the Warehouse District (reopened after fire-related damage forced closure early this year)

» **Nohea Cafe**, a casual counter-service cafe in Roscoe Village

» **Park Place**, a super-sized Edison Park spot serving hearty American fare

» **Don Diablo**, a counter-service taqueria in western Logan Square from the team behind Fonda del Mar (which has moved to the former FDM space in North Center)

» **Oak Mill Bakery**, a Bucktown outpost of the European-style bakery with five suburban locations

» **La Ciudad**, an Uptown BYOB inspired by the streets of Mexico City

M. KATHLEEN PRATT IS THE METROMIX DINING PRODUCER. ERIN OSMON IS A METROMIX SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR. KPRATT@TRIBUNE.COM

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Epic, chef Stephen Wambach's gargantuan River North eatery and lounge, opened mid-month. Read our First Look at metromix.com.

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FILE FOR METROMIX

6 DEGREES

\$3.50 Fat Tire drafts, half-price appetizers; 1935 N. Damen Ave. 773-904-8812.

COOPER'S

Half-price burgers; 1232 W. Belmont Ave. 773-929-2667.

ENGLISH

Half-price bottles of wine, \$5 signature martinis; 444 N. LaSalle St. 312-222-6200.

FIVE STAR BAR

\$1.50 tacos, \$2.50 Olympia cans; 1424 W. Chicago Ave. 312-850-2555.

GLASCOTT'S

\$3 Miller Lite bottles, \$4 Fat Tire drafts; 2158 N. Halsted St. 773-281-1205.

THE GLOBE PUB

\$4 Murphy's drafts; 1934 W. Irving Park Rd. 773-871-3757.

HARRIGAN'S

\$2 domestic bottles; 2816 N. Halsted St. 773-248-5933.

HAWKEYE'S

\$4.25 draft of the month, \$7 Bud Light pitchers; 1458 W. Taylor St. 312-226-3951.

IN FINE SPIRITS LOUNGE

Half-price select bottles of wine; 5420 N. Clark St. 773-334-9463.

JUNIOR'S SPORTS LOUNGE

\$1 burgers with beverage purchase 5-7 p.m.; 724 W. Maxwell St. 312-421-2277.

KROLL'S SOUTH LOOP

\$3 select cocktails; 1736 S. Michigan Ave. 312-235-1400.

MEZE

\$5 Tito's vodka cocktails, \$15 sangria pitchers, \$3 tapas menu; 205 N. Peoria St. 312-666-6625.

REBEL

\$4 Belvedere cocktails and Bacardi bombs; 3462 N. Clark St. 773-975-2010.

THE RED CANARY

\$5 select glasses of wine, \$8 risotto; 695 N. Milwaukee Ave. 312-846-1475.

ROCKIT BAR & GRILL

\$3 select cocktails; 3700 N. Clark St. 312-645-4400.

SCARLET

\$3 select domestic bottles; 3320 N. Halsted St. 773-348-1053.

SOIREE

\$3 cocktails; 2438 N. Lincoln Ave. 773-477-8880.

WATERHOUSE

\$4 call drinks; 3407 N. Paulina St. 773-871-1200.

best bets

By Rebecca Palmore
rkpalmore@tribune.com

tue
29

Kwanzaa observance

Malcolm X Community College, 1900 W. Van Buren St. 312-850-7152

FREE

Browse traditional African clothes, food and other market items starting at 10 a.m. At noon, a cultural program features drums and dance. The market and activities continue through Friday.

wed
30

Eve of the Eve

The Stretch Bar & Grill, 3485 N. Clark St. 773-755-3980

Get the party started with live music from cover band Under cover and \$3 domestic bottles. Also, sign up for a chance to win NYE party tickets to Goodbar, Loft Six Ten and more. 9 p.m. No cover.

Wine tasting

Quartino, 626 N. State St. 312-698-5000

Tomorrow is for bubbly, tonight: Argentinean wines. Try four Don Cristobal 1492 varietals with snacks such as pizza and polenta fries. 7 p.m. \$20.

Salsa in the New Year

Latin Street Dancing, 215 W. Ontario St. 312-427-2572

Shake your hips and sip champagne at this club alternative. Includes a buffet of Latin food, tunes by DJ Frankie J and favors. 7 p.m. \$65. \$25 after midnight.

thu
31

The Chuckle Bowl Spectacular

Lincoln Square Lanes, 4874 N. Lincoln Ave.

A midnight toast of Miller High Life marks the coming year, plus live game show "Don't Spit the Water," bowling, pizza and \$3 domestic beers. 9 p.m. \$25-\$30. 773-251-1539.

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THE COUNT-
DOWN IS ON

20
10

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TUESDAY CONCERTS

BARRELHOUSE CHUCK

8:30 p.m. Free. Harlem Avenue Lounge, 3701 Harlem Ave., Berwyn. 708-484-3610.

CZAR, BLOOD OF THE TYRANT, CHICAGO THRASH ENSEMBLE

9:30 p.m. \$3-\$5. Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western Ave. 773-276-3600.

DAVID POLK PROJECT

8:30 p.m. \$10. FitzGerald's, 6615 Roosevelt Rd., Berwyn. 708-788-2118.

DEEP BLUE ORGAN TRIO

9 p.m. \$6. Green Mill, 4802 N. Broadway. 773-878-5552.

THE GOOD LIFE, TIM KINSELLA, OLD CANES

8:30 p.m. \$12. Subterranean, 2011 W. North Ave. housecallent.com

JESSE PALTER QUARTET

8:30 p.m. \$10. Katerina's, 1920 W. Irving Park Rd. 773-348-7592.

LEE BOYS, 56 HOPE ROAD, LAND OF ATLANTIS

8:30 p.m. \$12-\$15. Abbey Pub, 3420 W. Grace St. 773-478-4408.

LINSEY ALEXANDER BLUES BAND

9 p.m. \$8. Blue Chicago at Ohio, 536 N. Clark St. 312-661-0100.

LORNA BOSTON BAND

10:30 p.m. Cover varies. The Underground Wonder Bar, 10 E. Walton St. 312-266-7761.



Supersuckers

PETE GALANIS AND FRIENDS

9:30 p.m. \$5-\$7. Rosa's Lounge, 3420 W. Armitage Ave. 773-342-0452.

QUINTUS MCCORMICK, JOE BARR AND THE SOUL PURPOSE BAND

9:30 p.m. \$12. Kingston Mines, 2548 N. Halsted St. 773-477-4646.

ROY HARGROVE QUINTET

8 and 10 p.m. Cover varies. Jazz Showcase, 806 S. Plymouth Ct. 312-360-0234.

SANCTIFIED GRUMBLERS

9:30 p.m. \$5 donation. Hideout, 1354 W. Wabansia Ave. 773-227-4433.

SCOOP NATION, BLACKJACK SASS, ANYTHING BUT WEASEL, TYSON ALLISON

8:30 p.m. \$7. Elbo Room, 2871 N. Lincoln Ave. 773-549-5549.

SEAN KELLNER, JOEY MARCANTONIO, DAVE BOVIN

9 p.m. \$5. Double Door, 1572 N. Milwaukee Ave. 773-489-3160.

SIGNAL PATH, STEEZ

9 p.m. \$15. The Kinetic Playground, 1113 W. Lawrence Ave. 773-769-5483.

STUDEBAKER JOHN AND THE HAWKS

9:30 p.m. \$10. Buddy Guy's Legends, 754 S. Wabash Ave. 312-427-0333.

SUPERSUCKERS, STEEPWATER BAND, WABASH CANNONBALLS, GUN HAT

8 p.m. \$15. Reggie's Rock Club, 2109 S. State St. 312-949-0121.

THEM DAMN KIDS, ROB REID

8 p.m. \$5 suggested donation. Uncommon Ground on Clark, 3800 N. Clark St. 773-929-3680.

TOM SCHRAEDER AND HIS EGO, JOHN HENRY AND THE ENGINE, DICK PRALL

9 p.m. \$10. Schubas, 3159 N. Southport Ave. 773-525-2508.

TORONZO CANNON AND THE CANNONBALL EXPRESS

9:30 p.m. \$5. B.L.U.E.S., 2519 N. Halsted St. 773-528-1012.

TWEEZER

9 p.m. \$5-\$8. Bottom Lounge, 1375 W. Lake St. 312-666-6775.

TYPHANIE MONIQUE TRIO

5 p.m. \$5. Andy's Jazz Club, 11 E. Hubbard St. 312-642-6805.

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Do you spoon?

By **Alexia Elejalde-Ruiz**

REDEYE

Last month, Playboy named Chicago's Diner Grill to its A-list of 10 diners "that truly embody the American late-night experience."

Calling the 24-hour Diner Grill "a tribute to all things Formica and fluorescent," Playboy lauded its signature heart-attack-on-a-plate, The Slinger—a monstrous pile of hash browns, burger patties, cheese, over-easy eggs and chili—as irresistible to "drunks and gourmands alike."

Formica, fluorescent lights, grease galore and drunks—the very things that drive some restaurant-goers out the door are what others love most about their neighborhood greasy spoon.

And sure enough, shortly after 1 a.m. on a recent Sunday, every stool at the Diner Grill, 1635 W. Irving Park Rd., was occupied, and a steady flow of late-night partyers kept the flat grill sizzling and the counter buzzing.

"It smells like vomit in here!" a customer exclaimed as he walked into the narrow diner with a group of rowdy friends. The restaurant, housed in an old train car, was playing "Hotel Rwanda" on an old TV in one corner, while a jukebox in the other corner spilled the occasional Guns N' Roses or Johnny Cash.

For the record: RedEye detected no vomit smell, and in fact the worn white counter was clean, the floor was swept and the grill was scraped of grease at a regular clip.

But the pros manning the grill didn't flinch, accustomed to the rowdy brutes who come in as the bars close, and served the attitude right back at the customers. The witty banter with the cooks, wearing aprons and paper hats, is one reason the Diner Grill is so popular.

"They're nice when you go in," said Jacqueline Jablonski, who lives in Wrigleyville. "You're drunk and they don't care."

Jablonski, 26, described the feeling of the diner as "like sitting in your own kitchen," while her friend Amy Peterson, 25, said she's drawn to the "ageless, timeless concept" of diners and comfort food.

Adam Bogrow said the main appeal of greasy spoons is that it serves up food you can make at home, but don't want to—and they do it lightning fast.

"I like the aura of the place," said Bogrow, 27, who lives in Lakeview. "You get the grease, you get the food, and that's all you're looking for."

It's not just an after-bar stop.

Omkar Bhatt said he likes to eat there day and night, in large part because it lacks ambience.

"There's a lot of places around here with ambience," said Bhatt, 26, who lives in Lakeview. "A place like this is extremely rare in Chicago."

And then there is The Slinger, which comes with a certificate if you finish it in one sitting.



THAT'S A DEAL BREAKER

Dirty dishes, snobby servers—Chicagoans have a host of reasons they won't eat at spots

By Alexia Elejalde-Ruiz
REDEYE

Alvin Yu, a personal chef and self-professed food snob, can tell before taking a bite whether a restaurant is worth his money.

Uneducated servers are an immediate turnoff, Yu said, because if they can't speak intelligently about the food, they can't steer him to the best dishes. Chipped plates also are unacceptable, as are table settings that don't match the ambience—a five-star restaurant with paper napkins, for example.

His biggest pet peeve: Pretentiously small portions.

"If I have to go out and eat a hamburger afterward, that's not a good sign," said Yu, 31, of Edgewater, who owns the personal chef service Fyusion. While food is the most important measure of any restaurant, bad service and dirty digs can be dining deal breakers—something restaurants can barely afford in the best of times, let alone in this tight economy when diners are cutting back on eating out.

Sales at full-service restaurants (counting only food and nonalcoholic beverages) are down an estimated 8 percent this year over last, according to Technomic, a Chicago-based food industry research and consulting firm. Though there are signs of improvement—sales were down 6.3 percent in September versus 12 percent in August—Technomic says restaurants are experiencing "perhaps the worst market conditions the restaurant industry has seen in nearly 20 years."

People with smaller disposable incomes are choosier about where they go on the rare occasions when they do dine out, so restaurants are advised to be on their best behavior.

"When the opportunity to enjoy a meal purchased away from home does occur, consumers want to be very sure there are no surprises," Technomic said in a white paper released earlier this year that described the "winning restaurant formula" to satisfy

the changing consumer. "If, for whatever reason, the overall meal experience does not match the dining party's expectations, there may not be an immediate opportunity for a do-over."

For many Chicagoans interviewed by RedEye, bad service is a prime dining deal breaker.

Michaela Boddie said it bothers her when the restaurant host or hostess acts indifferent when she walks in.

"If you can't treat me like you even care that I'm here, then I should just go," the Gold Coast resident said.

Boddie, 20, said repeat mistakes also are unforgivable. She said she abandoned her favorite taco joint after the staff got her order wrong on several occasions and then, as the last straw, forgot to include silverware in her takeout bag.

A snobbish attitude is enough to keep Jean-Pierre Nunez and his wife, Margaret Quinlan, from returning to a restaurant. The Uptown couple remembers trying a trendy new pizza spot in Ravenswood that everyone was raving about and found it overrated, overpriced, with an hour-long wait and a staff that couldn't have cared less.

"Even if there are food problems, as long as they're nice and try to fix it, that's OK," said Nunez, 36.

Cleanliness is another make-it-or-break-it factor in the dining experience.

Michael Berkos, 41, of Tinley Park, said he can't stomach a restaurant where he sees servers or cooks scratching their heads, rubbing their noses or failing to wash their hands.

Dirty silverware and lipstick-stained glasses have diners like 21-year-old Emina Halilovic of Edgewater running for the door.

For Lela French, sticky tables are deal breakers, and she always checks out how dirty the floors and windows are.

"If they can't clean the windows and floors, I don't even want

RESTA-RANTS

The top three reasons people do not return to a full-service restaurant, Technomic found in a November survey of 500 consumers:

1. The service is not pleasant and friendly.
2. The diner does not feel comfortable and welcomed in the restaurant.
3. Problem resolution is not handled quickly, quietly or in an efficient manner.

to know what goes on in the back," said French, 26, who lives in the South Loop.

As for 44-year-old James Chiles of Washington Heights, any restaurant cited by city inspectors for sanitation violations is dead to him, even if management abides by the requirement to clean up and pass reinspection before reopening. Chiles said he can't trust that they won't revert back to their dirty habits.

Of course, the level of service, cleanliness and ambience expected depends on the type of restaurant and how much money you're shelling out to dine there.

Yu, the personal chef, has high standards for fine dining, but will tolerate far coarser conditions at casual eateries and greasy spoons—including a favorite Chinese barbecue restaurant, where during one visit he and his companions spotted a cockroach on the wall.

"We just looked at it and kept eating our food," Yu said.

And did he ever go back?

"I go there once a week," he said. "That's just something you expect." aelejalderuiz@tribune.com



A TASTE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

We asked RedEye's Twitter followers and Facebook fans to talk to us about their dining dealbreakers. Here are some of the responses. Dish with RedEye on Twitter at twitter.com/redeyechicago and on Facebook at facebook.com/TheRedEye.

COMPILED BY SCOTT KLEINBERG.

FACEBOOK

Arianna Joyce:

Poor service and eww, if I find hair in my food!

Steven Rosenthal

Filthy silverware always does it 4 me

Hailey Horwath

Honestly unruly patrons is one of my biggest turnoffs.

Ashraf Ansari

Writers who drop off the menu and seem to forget to come back and take your order!

Walker Lawrence

Hot food, that has been sitting underneath the heating lamp for 20 mins. Stale and hot. GROSS!

TWITTER

@amandagilmore

Finding a hair in your food, neglecting customers, dirty utensils

@cookanddog

Bathrooms are how I judge a restaurant. Dealbreakers: No toilet paper, only air dryer for hands, no atmosphere, messy. Yuck

@DJFrancis

Servers sniffing and wiping their runny nose on their hand. Once you start looking for it, you see it everywhere. Bleh.

@NeilGUS

Asking if "I need change" Is like saying is my tip in here too or did you forget?

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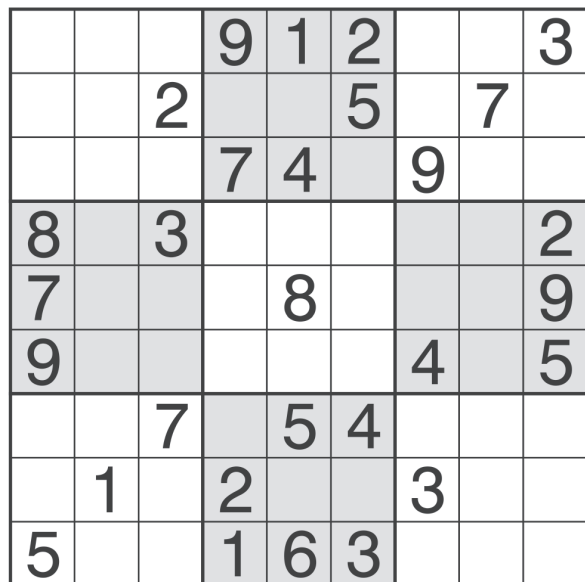


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MONDAY'S SOLUTIONS

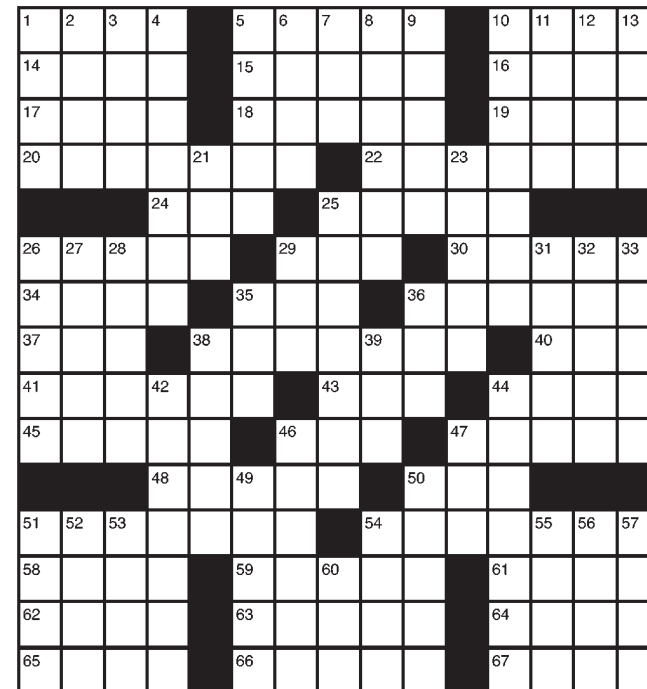
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ACROSS

- 1 Sombreros
- 5 Muslim holy war
- 10 Unconscious state
- 14 Huge continent
- 15 Sun-dried brick
- 16 Hairy beasts
- 17 Feel dizzy
- 18 Naval Academy newcomer
- 19 Place in order of importance
- 20 To some extent
- 22 Blood clot
- 24 Charged atom
- 25 Valuable
- 26 Lying flat
- 29 13th letters
- 30 Female relative
- 34 Only
- 35 Colorful Japanese fish
- 36 Make beloved
- 37 Use an abacus
- 38 Fine
- 40 Have regrets
- 41 Wiggle room
- 43 Sheep's cry
- 44 Word before brake or jockey
- 45 Cash
- 46 Priest's white garment
- 47 Say "Hi" to
- 48 Marsh grass
- 50 One in a pod
- 51 Nasal opening
- 54 Mender's scraps
- 58 Just a single time
- 59 Fight off
- 61 Lively dance
- 62 Night twinkler
- 63 Makes progress
- 64 Cry of pain
- 65 Brass instrument
- 66 Hollow
- 67 Projecting part of a church

DOWN

- 1 Stringed instrument
- 2 Bewildered
- 3 Wedding cake layer
- 4 Soup cracker
- 5 Asian nation
- 6 In a lazy way



- 7 Garden tool
- 8 Convent superior
- 9 worthy; considers fit
- 10 Neck artery
- 11 Precious gem
- 12 List of dishes
- 13 _for; requests
- 21 Misery
- 23 Late Jack
- 25 Good-natured
- 26 Biblical hymn
- 27 Roper's event

- 28 Of times past
- 29 Long period
- 31 Mysterious
- 32 Reason
- 33 Build
- 35 A major or C minor, e.g.
- 36 Greek letter
- 38 Check writer
- 39 Science class
- 42 Cowboy film
- 44 Greek coin before the euro

- 46 Shining
- 47 Acquire
- 49 Song of lament
- 50 _walsy; very friendly
- 51 Have a snack
- 52 Not fooled by
- 53 Surgical mark
- 54 _up; confined
- 55 Circular strip
- 56 Generations
- 57 Not crazy
- 60 _-squeak; young

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- **It's Com** (R) 11:45, 2:30, 5:15, 8:00, 11:00
- **Sherlock Holmes** (PG-13) 10:00, 1:15, 4:15, 7:15, 10:15
- AMC Select **Up in the Air** (R) 11:00, 1:40, 4:45, 7:30, 10:30
- **Avatar** (PG-13) 12:30, 4:00, 7:45, 11:15
- **Did You Hear** (PG-13) 10:30, 1:05, 3:35, 6:45, 9:30
- **Avatar 3D** (PG-13) 11:30, 3:15, 7:00, 10:45
- **Invictus** (PG-13) 10:15, 1:20, 4:30, 7:50, 10:50
- **The Blind Side** (PG-13) 7:10, 10:05
- **Christmas Carol** (PG) 10:50, 1:35, 4:20

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- **A Single Man** (R) 2:00, 4:40, 7:40, 10:15
- **Crazy Heart** (R) 1:55, 4:45, 7:30, 10:05
- **Broken Embraces** (R) 1:15, 4:10, 7:05, 10:00
- **Young Victoria** (PG) 1:30, 4:15, 7:10, 9:40
- **Fantastic Fox** (PG) 1:50, 4:50, 7:15, 9:30
- **A Serious Man** (R) 4:20, 9:50
- **An Education** (PG-13) 1:40, 7:00

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- **Sherlock Holmes** (PG-13) ★ (Closed caption) 10:45, 1:45, 5:15, 8:15, 11:15
- **Squeakquel** (PG) ★ 9:20, 10:00, 11:00, 11:40, 12:45, 1:30, 2:00, 3:10, 3:50, 4:40, 5:30, 6:10, 7:20, 8:00, 8:40, 9:45, 11:00
- **Avatar 3D** (PG-13) ★ 10:30, 12:00, 2:20, 3:30, 6:00, 7:00, 9:30, 10:30
- **Avatar** (PG-13) ★ 11:30, 3:00, 6:30, 10:00
- **Princess-Frog** (G) 9:40, 12:10, 2:40, 5:00, 7:30, 9:55
- **Brothers** (R) 10:50, 1:50, 4:50, 7:40, 10:50
- **The Blind Side** (PG-13) 9:30, 12:20, 3:20, 6:20, 9:20
- **Twilight: Moon** (PG-13) 10:20, 1:10, 4:10, 7:10, 10:10
- **2012** (PG-13) 10:20 P.M.
- **Christmas Carol** (PG) 9:45 A.M.

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- **Sherlock Holmes** (PG-13) ★ 11:20, 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, 9:50
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- **Up in the Air** (R) ★ 12:20, 2:40, 5:00, 7:20, 9:45
- **Invictus** (PG-13) 2:10, 4:50, 7:30, 10:10

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- **Avatar** (PG-13) 10:00, 11:40, 1:30, 3:15, 5:10, 7:00, 8:40, 10:20
- **Did You Hear** (PG-13) 11:10, 1:45, 4:40, 7:15, 9:55
- **Princess-Frog** (G) 10:10, 11:30, 12:30, 1:50, 2:50, 4:15, 5:20, 7:05, 8:00, 9:30, 10:25
- **Invictus** (PG-13) 10:15, 1:10, 4:00, 6:50, 9:50
- **Armored** (PG-13) 10:05, 12:20, 2:30, 4:45, 7:20, 9:35
- **Ninja Assassin** (R) 10:25, 12:50, 3:15, 5:35, 7:50, 10:10
- **Planet 51** (PG) 11:45, 2:00, 4:10
- **Twilight: Moon** (PG-13) 10:25, 3:45, 9:15
- AMC Select **Precious: Novel** (R) 1:15, 6:40
- **The Blind Side** (PG-13) 10:50, 1:45, 4:35, 7:30, 10:15
- **2012** (PG-13) 6:20, 9:45

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- **Twilight: Moon** (PG-13) 2:05, 5:40, 8:20
- **2012** (PG-13) 2:15, 5:25, 8:15
- **Planet 51** (PG) 2:10, 4:20, 6:30, 8:40
- **Old Dogs** (PG) 2:00, 4:10, 6:20, 8:30

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- **Mr Hulots Hol.** (NR) 2:00, 3:55, 5:45, 7:45, 9:45
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- **3 Idiots** (NR) 11:00, 2:30, 6:00
- AMC Select **The Road** (R) 11:30, 2:00, 4:30, 7:00
- AMC Select **Me and Orson** (PG-13) 11:40, 2:15, 7:30
- AMC Select **Boondock II** (R) 4:50 P.M.
- AMC Select **New York** (R) 11:20, 1:50
- AMC Select **The Hurt Locker** (R) 4:20, 7:20

RIVER EAST 21 (AMC)

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888-AMC-4FUN
Show times change daily

AMC Select - The best specialty films

- AMC Select **Nine** (PG-13) 9:55, 1:10, 4:25, 7:40, 10:55
- **It's Com** (R) 10:40, 11:40, 1:40, 2:40, 4:40, 5:40, 7:45, 8:45, 10:50
- **Sherlock Holmes** (PG-13) 9:30, 10:30, 12:45, 1:45, 4:00, 5:00, 7:15, 8:15, 10:30
- **Squeakquel** (PG) 10:25, 1:05, 3:45, 6:20, 9:00
- AMC Select **Up in the Air** (R) 9:35, 11:10, 12:10, 2:05, 3:05, 5:05, 6:05, 8:05, 9:05, 10:50
- **Avatar** (PG-13) 12:00, 4:00, 8:00
- AMC Select **Young Victoria** (PG) 11:20, 2:15, 5:10, 7:50, 10:35
- **Did You Hear** (PG-13) 10:10, 12:50, 3:40, 6:30, 9:10
- **Avatar 3D** (PG-13) 10:00, 10:45, 11:30, 2:00, 2:45, 3:30, 6:00, 6:45, 7:30, 10:00, 10:30
- AMC Select **Crazy Heart** (R) 10:05, 11:05, 1:10, 2:10, 4:15, 5:15, 7:20, 8:20, 10:25
- **Princess-Frog** (G) 9:40, 12:30, 3:20, 6:05, 8:50
- **Invictus** (PG-13) 10:20, 1:35, 4:55, 8:10
- **Brothers** (R) 11:00, 1:50, 7:40, 10:20
- **Twilight: Moon** (PG-13) 9:50, 1:15, 7:55
- AMC Select **Precious: Novel** (R) 4:45 P.M.
- **The Blind Side** (PG-13) 9:55, 1:00, 4:10, 7:25, 10:40
- **2012** (PG-13) 4:20 P.M.

CROWN VILLAGE 18 (KERASOTES)

7000 Carpenter Rd., Skokie
(800) 326-3264 #2309

- **It's Com** (R) ★ 1:20, 4:20, 7:10, 10:05
- **Nine** (PG-13) ★ 12:50, 4:00, 6:50, 9:45
- **Sherlock Holmes** (PG-13) ★ 12:15, 1:15, 3:15, 4:15, 6:15, 7:15, 9:15, 10:15
- **Up in the Air** (R) ★ 12:40, 2:10, 3:40, 5:00, 6:40, 7:40, 9:20, 10:15
- **Squeakquel** (PG) ★ 12:10, 1:30, 2:30, 3:50, 4:50, 6:10, 7:20, 9:40
- **Avatar 3D** (PG-13) ★ 12:00, 1:00, 3:30, 4:30, 7:00, 8:10, 10:30
- **Avatar** (PG-13) ★ 3:00, 6:30, 10:00
- **Did You Hear** (PG-13) ★ 2:40, 5:20, 8:00, 10:25
- **The Road** (R) ★ 1:10, 4:10, 6:45, 9:30
- **Invictus** (PG-13) 3:20, 6:55, 9:55

(continued)

- **Princess-Frog** (G) 12:20, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50
- **Brothers** (R) 6:20, 9:10
- **The Blind Side** (PG-13) 1:40, 4:40, 7:45, 10:40
- **Twilight: Moon** (PG-13) 1:50, 4:45, 7:50, 10:45
- **2012** (PG-13) 9:00 P.M.
- **Christmas Carol** (PG) 12:30, 3:10

WEBSTER PLACE (KERASOTES)

1471 W. Webster Ave., Chicago
(800) 326-3264 #1641

- **It's Com** (R) ★ 10:30, 1:30, 4:30, 7:30, 10:40
- **Sherlock Holmes** (PG-13) ★ 10:15, 12:15, 1:15, 3:15, 4:15, 6:15, 7:15, 9:15, 10:15
- **Up in the Air** (R) ★ 11:00, 1:50, 2:20, 3:40, 5:50, 7:40, 8:10, 10:20, 10:45
- **Squeakquel** (PG) ★ 9:50, 12:20, 2:40, 5:00, 7:20, 9:40
- **Avatar 3D** (PG-13) ★ 12:00, 3:30, 7:00, 10:30
- **Avatar** (PG-13) ★ 11:30, 3:00, 6:30, 10:00
- **Did You Hear** (PG-13) ★ 10:50, 1:40, 4:10, 9:50
- **Invictus** (PG-13) 10:00, 1:00, 4:00, 7:10, 10:25
- **The Blind Side** (PG-13) 9:45, 12:40, 3:45, 6:40, 9:45

SHOWPLACE 14 - GALEWOOD CROSSINGS (KERASOTES)

E. Side of Central Ave., just S. of Grand Ave.
(800) 326-3264 #1646

- **Sherlock Holmes** (PG-13) ★ 12:45, 1:15, 3:45, 4:15, 6:45, 7:15, 9:45, 10:15
- **Squeakquel** (PG) ★ 12:10, 1:50, 2:20, 2:50, 4:20, 4:50, 5:20, 6:50, 7:20, 7:50, 9:10, 9:40, 10:10
- **Avatar 3D** (PG-13) ★ 12:00, 3:30, 7:00, 10:30
- **Avatar** (PG-13) ★ 3:00, 6:30, 10:00
- **Did You Hear** (PG-13) ★ 2:00, 4:40, 7:30, 10:45
- **Invictus** (PG-13) 1:00, 4:00, 7:10, 10:20
- **Princess-Frog** (G) 1:40, 4:10, 6:40, 9:00
- **Armored** (PG-13) 12:30, 2:40, 5:15, 8:00, 10:35
- **The Blind Side** (PG-13) 3:10, 6:20, 9:30
- **Twilight: Moon** (PG-13) 10:30, 1:30, 4:30, 7:40, 10:40
- **2012** (PG-13) 6:10, 9:50
- **Christmas Carol** (PG) 1:20, 3:50

CICERO SHOWPLACE 14 (KERASOTES)

4779 W. Cermak
(800) 326-3264 #1644

- **It's Com** (R) ★ 1:45, 4:40, 7:30, 10:20
- **Nine** (PG-13) ★ 12:50, 3:50, 6:50, 9:50
- **Sherlock Holmes** (PG-13) ★ 1:15, 4:15, 6:45, 7:15, 9:45, 10:15
- **Squeakquel** (PG) ★ 12:00, 1:50, 2:20, 2:50, 4:20, 4:50, 5:20, 7:20, 9:40
- **Avatar 3D** (PG-13) ★ 12:00, 3:30, 7:00, 10:30
- **Avatar** (PG-13) ★ 3:00, 6:30, 10:00
- **Did You Hear** (PG-13) ★ 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:45
- **Invictus** (PG-13) 12:15, 3:20, 6:20, 9:30
- **Princess-Frog** (G) 1:40, 4:10, 6:40, 9:00
- **Armored** (PG-13) 12:30, 2:45, 5:15
- **The Blind Side** (PG-13) 1:00, 4:00, 7:10, 10:10
- **Twilight: Moon** (PG-13) 7:40, 10:40
- **2012** (PG-13) 1:10, 4:30, 8:00
- **Christmas Carol** (PG) 8:00, 10:35

SHOWPLACE ICON

Clark & Roosevelt, South Loop, Chicago
(312) 564-2104

- **It**

whoville

David Caruso, 'NYPD Blue'

Caruso's career took off when he starred on the gritty, butt-baring cop show. He left in 1994 to try his hand at movies, including "Jade," and failed on a grand level. His name became shorthand for ego-driven stupidity and career suicide, although his co-starring stint on "CSI Miami" has given him a steady paycheck and some respect again.



Caruso
CBS

TELEVISION TIME-OUTS

Tyra Banks is pulling the plug on her talk show. "The Tyra Show" will end after this season, but Banks says she'll continue "America's Next Top Model" and is forming a new production studio with plans to make movies.

The news comes just a few weeks after Banks' mentor, Oprah Winfrey, announced she'll put an end to her show in 2011. These two certainly aren't the first TV stars to halt popular talk shows or leave series—or to be booted from them.

A sample of surprising TV exits over the years. EMILY ROSENBAUM MAKAS, REDEYE



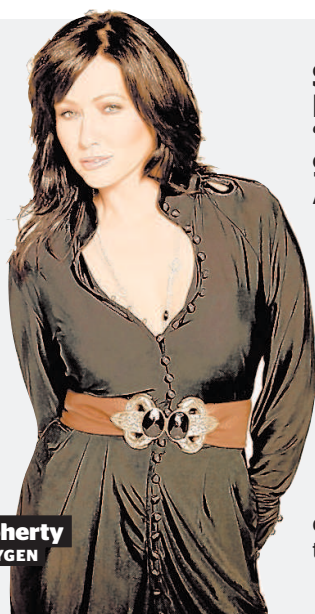
Letterman
CBS

David Letterman, 'Late Night'

When Johnny Carson announced in 1992 that he would be leaving his late-night talk show on NBC, it set off a major scuffle over who would replace him. Letterman wanted the gig, as did Jay Leno. Leno won, and Dave jumped ship for a big fat contract with CBS.

Shannen Doherty, 'Beverly Hills, 90210'

A nasty person playing a sweet character—that was the word back in the '90s regarding Doherty, who left "Beverly Hills" after four seasons and many, many rumors of bratty behavior. But you can go home again, as Doherty has done by appearing on the new "90210."



Doherty
OXYGEN

Isaiah Washington, 'Grey's Anatomy'

An on-set spat between Washington and Patrick Dempsey turned ugly when Washington allegedly called T.R. Knight a "faggot." After a public outcry, Washington's option was not renewed in 2007.



Washington
GETTY IMAGES

Rosie O'Donnell, 'The View'

O'Donnell's mercurial co-hosting gig ended in 2007 when she announced: "They wanted me three years, I wanted one year, and it just didn't work." But there was speculation that her frequent run-ins with Elisabeth Hasselbeck were at least partly to blame for her abrupt departure, or shove.



The hosts of "The View"
ABC



Long



Fawcett



Somers

SHELLEY LONG, 'CHEERS'

FARRAH FAWCETT, 'CHARLIE'S ANGELS'

SUZANNE SOMERS, 'THREE'S COMPANY'

These three women were on wildly popular 1970s and '80s shows and walked away. Why? There were rumors of tension on the "Cheers" set, but Long has said she left to spend more time with her baby. Fawcett, whose husband Lee Majors reportedly wanted her home every night to cook dinner, broke her contract after only one season of "Angels" and attempted a movie career. Somers ditched "Company" after a heated contract dispute.

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Lady Gaga
GETTY IMAGES

Gaga going to the 'burbs

Is Rosemont ready for Lady Gaga? Gaga's Jan. 8-10 concerts are moving to the Rosemont Theatre from the Chicago Theatre due to the size of the production. Original tickets must be refunded at the point of purchase and new tickets must be bought for the Rosemont shows. Go to livenation.com/ladygagachicago for more info.



Fall-down boy

Pete Wentz sports a major gash across his nose in photos he uploaded on his blog this week. The singer gave fans a list of tongue-in-cheek scenarios as to the cause, including: "I was wasted. You should see the other guy" and "Starring in community theatre re-telling of 'Edward Scissorhands.'"

Getting real

It's the end of the year and that can only mean more random pop-culture top 10 lists! The folks at The Hollywood Reporter are sharing their top reality-show moments of the decade and topping their list was Kris Allen's victory on "American Idol." Another favorite was Somethin' from "Flavor of Love" pooping on the floor after an elimination, making it two eliminations in one night.



Tabatha Coffey
BRAVO

Tabatha Coffey can reduce men to tears. Coffey, who whips hair salons into shape on Bravo's "Tabatha's Salon Takeover," met stylist Drew Freund in February when she stormed Boystown salon Chicago Male. The episode airs at 9 p.m. Tuesday. "She calls me a cry-baby," Freund told RedEye on Monday. In the episode, Coffey spends a lot of time criticizing Freund's cuts and suggests he needs more training. Freund says he has no hard feelings. "I do know what I'm doing," he said Monday. "I took her advice and I'm a better person now than I was before." For more on the show, go to redeychicago.com/showpatrol.



Freund

COUPLE METER

CONVERSING

CUDDLING

CAVORTING

CANOODLING

CONSUMMATING



Split decision

Some celeb couples who cooled are back on, at least on vacation. Jude Law and Sienna Miller (at left) have been hanging out on the beach in Barbados with three of his kids and Leonardo DiCaprio and model Bar Refaeli (at right) were photographed getting some sun in Mexico. Just a couple of holiday hook-ups, or are these couples reuniting?

